



Church of Christ

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204 Dix Road Jefferson City, MO 65109

Heart to Heart...

We want our faith increased. I don't know of one sincere Christian that doesn't want their faith to grow. Many think that their knowledge of the Bible is a faith increase. It's true you need the knowledge but knowledge doesn't mean your faith has grown. You must do something with the knowledge you gain.

The apostles asked Jesus, **“Increase our faith!”** (Luke 17:5) Why would they make such a statement? Jesus had just finished talking about forgiving one another. **“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”** (Luke 17:3-4) We have had people sin against us, but what about someone who sins against us seven times in one day? We don't know forgiveness very well. How many of us would forgive or would we say, **“If you were sincere in your repentance, you would not sin against me again today!”** We seem to put obstacles in front of what the Lord wants from us. The result? No increase in our faith.

The apostles heard these words and asked Jesus to increase their faith! How did Jesus respond? Let's talk about faith! He uses the illustration of a slave plowing or tending sheep. The slave comes into the house from the field. Does the master tell his slave to sit down and eat a meal? No! The slave prepares a meal for the master and after that, then the slave can sit and eat. (Luke 17:7-8) Listen to the next words of Jesus: **“He does not thank the slave because he did the thing which were commanded, does he?”** (Luke 17:9) The slave isn't praised or thanked for what is expected. He's the slave, not the master. He's just a servant of the master. He is doing what he is expected to do. **“So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’”** (Luke 17:10) What's His point? There will be no faith increase until you start doing what is expected from the Lord! It's not a matter of understand but responding. You want your faith to grow? What's expected? If someone sins against you seven times in one day and repents seven times, forgive him!! That's expected. There has to be a willingness to follow the Lord with a whole heart or there can never be an increase in faith.

Many times we don't want to do what is right. We have been wronged by someone and we hold to the hurt rather than let it go and forgive. There will be no increase of faith, no matter how much you study God's word. We must be people who do what is right, the Lord's way. Are you a mother and wife? What's expected from the Lord for you? Are you a father and husband? What's expected from the Lord for you? Do you work for someone? Are you a brother or sister in Christ? What does the Lord expect?

We need to be people who walk with a whole heart toward the Lord. No games, no excuses! Just simply doing what He asks us to do. Only then, and at no other time, will your faith begin to increase. When you read from God's holy Word, how do you respond to it? By knowledge in your mind so you can quote it or by faith and walking in it? When the Lord asks us to give up bitterness and resentments, how quickly do you do that? It will determine your increase in faith or not. That's dependant upon the willingness of your heart. The Lord asks us to love the brotherhood but we don't want to embrace them with a whole heart. Where does that leave you? Growing in faith or dying?

Faith can't come unless we hear. (Rom. 10:17) We can't hear if we aren't willing to respond to what's expected. The Lord considers our faith as more precious than anything on earth. (I Pet. 1:7-9) Is your faith increasing? Think about it!!!

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